

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER OF LABOR VILJOEN ON SAG
PLANS TO AMEND BLACK LABOR LEGISLATION

REF: JOHANNESBURG 1287

1. AMBASSADOR AND LABOR OFFICER PAID ONE-HOUR VISIT
TO LABOR MINISTER VILJOEN IN PRETORIA MORNING OF
SEPTEMBER 10 FOR PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING SAG'S PLANS
TO AMEND BLACK LABOR LEGISLATION IN MANNER INDICATED
REFTEL, I.E. TO GIVE FORCE OF LAW TO AGREEMENTS
REACHED BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND BLACK WORKS AND LIAISON
COMMITTEES AND TO AUTHORIZE SETTING UP "INDUSTRIAL
COMMITTEE" FOR BLACK INDUSTRY-WIDE BARGAINING.

2. STATING THAT CABINET HAD ALREADY APPROVED PROPOSAL
FOR AMENDING LEGISLATION, VILJOEN EXPLAINED THAT EFFECT
WOULD BE TO STRENGTHEN THE PRESENT SYSTEM IN THE TWO AREAS
WHERE IT IS WEAKEST. VILJOEN NOTED THAT HOW TO PROVIDE TRAINING
OF BLACKS IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, ETC., IS THE ONLY
IMPORTANT UNRESOLVED PROBLEM.

3. ASKED HOW HE PROPOSED TO GO ABOUT GIVING SUCH
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TRAINING, HE SAID HE WAS LOOKING PRIMARILY TO EMPLOYERS

AND EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS INSTITUTE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (IPM) AND THE FEDERATED CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES (FCI). IN THIS CONNECTION, HE ALSO SAID HE WOULD APPRECIATE EFFORTS WE MIGHT MAKE TO ELICIT THE COOPERATION OF US FIRMS.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION WHETHER HE HAD CONSIDERED PROPOSAL OF REQUESTING TRADE UNION ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING TRAINING, HE RESPONDED IN NEGATIVE EXPLAINING THAT TRADE UNIONS WERE OPPOSED TO COMMITTEES AND THEREFORE COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO ASSIST IN ORGANIZING THEM.

5. VILJOEN REPLIED NEGATIVELY TO OUR QUERY WHETHER SAG PROPOSED TO EXTEND COMMITTEE SYSTEM TO MINING INDUSTRY, ADDING THAT REPORT OF INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO MINE DISTURBANCES (STILL UNPUBLISHED) RECOMMENDS STRENGTHENING PRESENT SYSTEM OF EMPLOYER-BLACK MINER COMMUNICATIONS, I.E. THE TRADITIONAL INDUNA SYSTEM.

6. COMMENT: THE SAG INTENTION IN GIVING LEGAL STATUS TO BLACK WAGE AGREEMENTS AND ESTABLISHING INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEES FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IS TO ENHANCE THE CREDIBILITY OF WORKS AND LIAISON COMMITTEES BY RAISING THEIR SCOPE AND STATUS. IN RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR LABOR TRAINING, HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS IT TO BE DONE BY WHAT IT REGARDS AS SYMPATHETIC MANAGEMENT-ORIENTED ORGANIZATION. VILJOEN IS MISTAKEN, HOWEVER, IF HE BELIEVES EMPLOYERS AND/OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS IPM OR FCI (RATHER THAN TRADE UNIONS) POSSESS THE RESOURCES NEEDED (INCLUDING CREDIBILITY) TO PROVIDE LABOR EDUCATION TO UNSOPHISTICATED BLACK MEMBERS OF LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF WORKS AND LIAISON COMMITTEES LOCATED IN ENTERPRISES LARGE AND SMALL ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. WHAT HE CANNOT FORESEE, OF COURSE, IS WHERE AN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, HOWEVER CONDUCTED, WILL LEAD IN TERMS OF HEIGHTENED BLACK LABOR CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS STRENGTH AND LEVERAGE.

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